

Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07

L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 OMB-01

NSCE-00 SSO-00 USIE-00 INRE-00 /071 W

----- 126337

O 210916Z FEB 75

FM AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 2026

INFO SECDEF WASHDC IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY LONDON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

JCS

CINCPAC

S E C R E T SINGAPORE 0711

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: MARR, MPOL, SN, NZ, UK

SUBJECT: APPROXIMATE TIMETABLE FOR WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH MILITARY
FORCES FROM SINGAPORE

REFS;&A. SINGAPORE 0671; B. USDAO SINGAPORE 200803Z;

C. STATE 039185

SUMMARY: UK MOD TEAM HAS COMPLETED DISCUSSIONS WITH GOS OFFICIALS
RE PHASE OUT OF UK FORCES FROM SINGAPORE. PLANS CALLING FOR
WITHDRAWAL

OF MOST UK FORCES BY END OF 1975 AND ALL FORCES BY MARCH 31, 1976
SHOULD RECEIVE FINAL STAMP OF APPROVAL IN LONDON WITHIN TEN DAYS.
POSSIBILITY OF GNZ MANAGEMENT OF CERTAIN NAVAL BASIN BERTHS DISCUSSED
WITH GOS SENIOR OFFICIALS WHO INDICATED GOS WOULD MANAGE BASIN
ITSELF AND MAKE BERTHS SIX AND SEVEN AVAILABLE ON PREFERRED BASIS
TO UK, AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND AND U.S. WARSHIPS. GOS WILL ALSO

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MANAGE FUEL DEPOT AND LEASE STORAGE SPACE TO UK WHICH CAN SUB-

LEASE TO U.S. NAVY. EMBASSY DOES NOT BELIEVE INITIAL GOS REJECTION AT SENIOR OFFICIALS LEVEL OF RNZN MANAGEMENT OF NAVAL BASIN BERTHS SHOULD ALTER IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION OF REF C INSTRUCTIONS. END SUMMARY.

1. UK DEPUTY HIGH COMMISSIONER WATTS INFORMED DCM FEBRUARY 20 THAT BRITISH MOD TEAM HAD COMPLETED DISCUSSIONS WITH GOS OFFICIALS AND WERE RETURNING TO LONDON WITH FIRM PLANS TO PHASE OUT UK FORCES. ACCORDING TO DAO INFO (SEE PARA 2(A) REF (B)) THESE PLANS WILL BE FINALIZED IN LONDON WITHIN TEN DAYS. GOS REPRESENTATIVES AT TALKS WERE PERMSEC MINDEF PANG TEE POW AND PERMSEC MINISTRY OF LAW AND NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT K. R. CHANDRA.

2. WATTS SAID WITHDRAWAL OF BRITISH FORCES WOULD BEGIN IN JULY AND THAT ALL REPEAT ALL FORCES WOULD BE WITHDRAWN BY MARCH 31, 1976 AT THE LATEST. MOST WOULD BE GONE BY END OF CY '75. APPROXIMATE TIMETABLE AS FOLLOWS:

- A. LONG-DISTANCE RECONNAISSANCE AIRCRAFT (NIMRODS) WOULD LEAVE IN JULY OR AUGUST.
- B. FRIGATE WOULD DEPART IN SEPTEMBER.
- C. RE-ENFORCED ARMY BATTALION (GORDON HIGHLANDERS) WOULD BEGIN PULLING OUT IN OCTOBER AND WOULD BE ALL GONE BY END OF DECEMBER OR POSSIBLY JANUARY 1976 AT VERY LATEST.
- D. RUN-DOWN OF PERSONNEL AT NAVAL BASIN WOULD MEAN THAT BY AUGUST THE ROYAL NAVY WOULD NO LONGER BE ABLE TO ACCEPT RESPONSIBILITIES FOR HANDLING NUCLEAR POWERED WARSHIPS. NAVAL BASIN WOULD BE TURNED OVER COMPLETELY TO GOS BY DECEMBER 1975 OR JANUARY 1976.
- E. OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT OF SENOKO FUEL FARM WOULD BE TURNED OVER TO GOS SOMETIME THIS YEAR, BUT ROYAL NAVY WOULD LEASE BACK WL OF THE 19 OIL STORAGE TANKS FOR ITS OWN AND ALLIED (INCLUDING U.S.) USE. IF U.S. WANTED TO OBTAIN ADDITIONAL STORAGE THIS WAS PROBABLY NEGOTIABLE. GOS HAD INFORMED MOD TEAM THAT IT WOULD ADVISE UK BY APRIL WHICH GOS STATUTORY BOARD WOULD MANAGE THE FUEL FARM. PSA, PUBLIC UTILITY BOARD, SINGAPORE PETROLEUM CORPORATION AND POSSIBLY PRIVATE OIL COMPANIES WERE ALL UNDER CONSIDERATION.

3. WATTS NOTED THEY HAD DISCUSSED WITH GOS POSSIBILITY OF NEW ZEALAND NAVY MANAGING BERTHS SIX AND SEVEN IN NAVAL BASIN, BUT GOS REPS HAD SHOWN NO INTEREST AND ADVISED THAT EITHER PORT OF SINGAPORE

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AUTHORITY (PSA) OR SEMBAWANG SHIPYARD (SSY) WOULD ASSUME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE BASIN, AND THAT FINAL DECISION AS TO WHICH STATUTORY BOARD WOULD BE GIVEN THIS RESPONSIBILITY WOULD BE MADE BY APRIL. GOS ALSO ADVISED THAT BERTHS SIX AND SEVEN IN THE NAVAL BASIN WOULD BE MADE AVAILABLE AT REASONABLE RENTAL CHARGE TO WARSHIPS OF FPDA POWERS AND U.S. ON A PREFERRED BASIS ASSUMING ADEQUATE NOTICE. ADEQUATE NOTICE WAS DEFINED AS BEING IN ACCORDANCE WITH REGULAR DIPLOMATIC PRACTICE (THIS MEANS APPROXIMATELY ONE MONTH NOTICE).

WHEN ASKED ABOUT EMERGENCIES, GOS OFFICIALS SAID THEY WOULD DO THEIR BEST TO BE ACCOMMODATING.

4. WATTS EXPRESSED OPINION PSA WOULD PROBABLY WIN OUT IN STRUGGLE TO GAIN CONTROL OF THIS VALUABLE PROPERTY BECAUSE DIRECTOR OFSUSA, HOWE YOON CHONG, MUCH MORE INFLUENTIAL THAN MANAGEMENT OF SSY. WATTS WAS DOUBTFUL WHETHER POLITICAL FACTORS MILITATING IN FAVOR OF GNZ MANAGEMENT OF BERTHS SIX AND SEVEN AT THE BASIN HAD BEEN FULLY CONSIDERED AT HIGHEST POLITICAL LEVEL IN GOS, AND BELIEVED THIS DECISION MIGHT BE REVERSED IF U.S. AND GNZ MADE STRONG PITCH TO DR. GOH OR PRIME MINISTER LEE.

5. DESPITE INITIAL GOS REJECTION AT SENIOR OFFICIALS LEVEL OF GNZ MANAGEMENT OF BERTHS SIX AND SEVEN, WE DO NOT BELIEVE THIS SHOULD AFFECT IMMEDIATE IMPLEMENTATION INSTRUCTIONS SET FORTH REF C. U.S. WILLINGNESS TO UNDERWRITE SUBSTANTIAL PORTION OF OPERATING COSTS MAY INCREASE GNZ AND GOS RECEPTIVITY TO PROPOSAL THAT GNZ MANAGE BOTH FUEL DEPOT AND RELATED SHIP BERTHS. FUEL DEPOT IS USED PRIMARILY BY WARSHIPS AND, UNLIKE THE NAVAL BASIN, THERE IS CONSIDERABLE DOUBT WHETHER IT CAN BE PROFITABLY OPERATED ON A COMMERCIAL BASIS. IF GNZ PREPARED TO OPERATE THE FUEL DEPOT, GOS MIGHT BE MORE WILLING TO ALLOW IT TO MANAGE THE RELATED BERTHS AT THE NAVAL BASIN.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: TROOP DEPLOYMENT, POLICIES, MILITARY BASES, FUELING SYSTEMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 21 FEB 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: KelleyW0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
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Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750062-0198
From: SINGAPORE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
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ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750223/aaaaauho.tel
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TAGS: MARR, MPOL, SN, NZ, UK, US
To: STATE
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